

REMARKS

This application is amended in a manner believed to place it in condition for allowance at the time of the next Official Action.

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the withdrawal of the election of species requirement.

The Official Action objects to claims 10-12 for depending from rejected claims.

Claim 1 is amended to include the features previously recited in claim 10 and claim 2, from which claim 10 depended. Accordingly, claims 2 and 10 are cancelled, and claims 3 and 11 are amended to depend from claim 1.

Claims 1, 3, 4, 11, 13, 15-19, 26, and 29-32 remain pending in the present application.

Claims 1-9, 13, 15-19, 26, and 29-32 are rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over WO 99/36445 (English equivalent U.S. 6,197,287) in view of FR 97-04876 (English equivalent U.S. 6,353,034). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 now recites the features previously recited in claim 10, i.e., features not determined to be unpatentable. Thus, the proposed combination fails to render obvious claim 1, and dependent claims 3, 4, 11, 13, 15-19, 26, and 29-32.

Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-9, 13, 19, 26, and 29-32 are rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness type double patenting as being unpatentable over claim 1-15 of U.S. 6,197,287 and claims 1-6 and 10-18 of U.S. 5,484,843. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

It is respectfully noted that claim 10 was not rejected. As claim 1 now recites the features previously recited in claim 10, neither patent renders obvious amended claim 1 and dependent claims 3, 4, 11, 13, 15-19, 26, and 29-32.

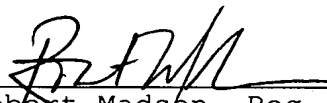
Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

In view of the above, applicants believe the present application is in condition for allowance at the time of the next Official Action. Allowance and passage on that basis is respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

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